McGILL, PETERSON, CANTRELL, CROW & ANDERSON WIN AT IRWINDALE

Race Date: September 16, 2006

by Tim Kennedy

Irwindale, CA., Sept. 16 - Jim McGill won his second NASCAR Lucas Oil Super Late Model 50-lap feature this year and the third triumph of his SLM career Saturday on Pepsi Night at the banked half-mile Irwindale Speedway. The 45-year old driver from Temecula started his Pechanga Resort & Casino-sponsored 2006 Chevy Monte Carlo in fourth position and earned $1,250 for his 0.419 of a second victory over fellow San Diego area resident David Beat. McGill, whose wife works as his race spotter via radio, drove his Jackson chassis with a Watkins-built engine. He solidified his hold on third place in point standings.

Second starter Beat, 47, gave the over 40-population hope when he led the first 23 laps in his 2005 Dodge Intrepid, built by Port City Cars, with an Auto Pro of Santa Barbara Chevy engine built by ex-driver James Weston. McGill passed Beat on the inside at turn four during lap 24 and stayed in front through lap 43. A caution flag flew on lap 44 for a two-car spinout in turn one by Kevin Thompson and Robby Sawyer as they fought for tenth place. Beat shot past McGill on the inside entering the third turn and forced McGill's car up the track in turn four when racing resumed on lap 44. McGill reclaimed the lead on lap 45 and led the final six laps, edging Beat by 0.419 of a second.

McGill and Beat told the media their cars were too tight earlier and they "tightened them up" for the feature. "My car was better coming off the turns," said outside runner McGill. Inside runner Beat added, "My car was better getting into the turns and he was better off turns. I was a little too free and his car stuck pretty good." Stephen Peace finished third, 0.885 back. Point leader Van Knill started eighth and finished fourth, with Doug McComb fifth. Fifteen of the 20 starters finished and all ran the full 50-lap distance. Knill entered the race with a 40-point advantage and lost four points of his lead to runner-up Beat, who now trails Knill 629-593.Twin-main events and a maximum of 100-points are available at the final race on September 30.

Ron Peterson became the third driver to clinch one of the ten 2006 IS series championships. He also won the 2004 Super Truck title at IS. The King Taco Super Truck point leader pushed his lead to 113-points with only round 14 of 14 remaining September 30. It was Peterson's tenth main event triumph of 2006 and the 31st of his career at Irwindale, moving him up to third place on the list of drivers with the most main event victories at the eight year old speedway. Two 2006 track champions were named last month and last week. Jeff Williams, in a Ford F-150, became a first-time IS champion on August 5 in West Coast Pro Truck race seven of seven. He edged the runner-up by 18-points. John Watkinson, the 2002 Grand American Modified track champion, earned his second GAM title September 9 after race three of three. He won all three features this year and won by 22-points.

As the quickest qualifier, Peterson spun two as the inverted start number for a 27-truck, 40-lap race on the half-mile. Pole starter Bill Sedgwick led the first lap. Peterson led lap 2-15, lost the lead for one lap (16th) to series rookie Matthew Hicks and then reclaimed the point a lap later. He paced the final 33 laps in a tight battle with runner-up Rich Geisler and Hicks. Geisler passed Hicks on lap 20 and the top trio prevailed despite caution flags on laps 24 and 31for solo spins. Peterson's 2003 Dodge Dakota beat Geisler by 0.316 and Hicks by 0.563. Dave Blankenship and Sedgwick completed the top five with 22 of 27

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starters racing at the finish and 20 drivers on the lead lap. The 14th and final series race will be held September 30.

The third feature with lead-swapping was the most competitive Legend cars 30-lap main of the year on the third-mile oval. Fastest qualifier Connor Cantrell, who turned 16 September 9, started sixth and became the fourth and final leader on lap 20. The race had six lead changes. Cantrell executed an inside turns three and four to starting line pass of Tom Landreth, a six-time 2006 feature winner and four-time series champion. Cantrell, in a replica 1937 Dodge coupe, won his second main event this year and the third during his two-years in the series. He also won the 2005 Legends rookie of the year award.

For the first time at IS, female drivers comprised the front row of a main event. Teens Bree Brewer, 16, and Lindsey King, 17, had the sixth and fifth fastest qualifying times in the 24-car field. They started first and second respectively. Brewer led the first three laps, plus laps 5 and 7-10. King was in front on laps 4 and 6. Landreth, the second fastest qualifier, came from fifth spot to pace laps 11-19. Cantrell's impressive inside-move past Landreth on lap 20 came without contacting Landreth's replica 1934 Ford coupe. Cantrell beat Landreth by 0.184 with 17-year old Damien High senior Austin Grabowski, a four-time Legends winner this year, third, 0.514 back. King took fourth (-0.654) and Brewer enjoyed her best effort to date by with fifth place (-1.315). Sixteen of 24 starters finished and 15 completed all 30 laps.

The first three Legend finishers pulled to the finish line for post-race interviews and awarding of plaques. Cantrell said, " It was pretty nerve-wracking there. Thanks to all the drivers. They raced me clean. Tom Landreth and I were so close in speed." Landreth, in his mid-30s, again praised his teenage rivals for their ability. "It's fun racing Connor and Austin and the young ladies. They're clean racers and have so much talent," Landreth told grandstand spectators. Two races-September 23 and 30-remain in the 16-race schedule. Landreth's point lead is 42 over King. Grabowski trails by 60 and Cantrell by 62, so any of the four drivers could win the 2006 series championship.

The Justice Brothers Pure Stock 20-lap race on the third-mile went to Rick "the Pink Panther" Crow in his pink "breast cancer awareness" 1972 Chevy Chevelle. He did not run a qualification lap and started last (10th). On lap eight entering the third turn Crow shot past fastest qualifier Mark Whitson's 1973 Chevy Malibu, which had led the first seven laps. The all-green flag race took 5:58.270 and nine of ten starters finished. Crow lapped the sixth place car on the final lap. Crow, a veteran of closed Saugus Speedway, won his tenth pure stock main of 2006. He has reeled off seven consecutive feature victories in the series, including a pair of pure stock figure 8 races following the usual mains on the third-mile oval. His streak started June 17 and included "twin-wins" on July 1 and September 9. A nine-car Bandolero Car 12-lap main on the third-mile went to pole starter Andrew Anderson, 13, of Lancaster. He led all the way for his fifth victory this year in his Briggs & Stratton powered car. Jack Madrid, 11, trailed by 10-yards and Jimmy Rouse, Jr, 12, finished third.

Qualifying Oddities: Rookie Todd Cameron set the Super Truck fast time about 3:00 p.m. However, during post-qualifying technical inspection officials found a sand-bag in the truck for ballast. His qualifying time was disallowed and Cameron had to start last in the 27-truck main event, which he did not finish. Two SLM drivers-Dan Moore and McGill-tied for fast time honors with identical laps of 18.198 (98.912 mph). Officials determined fast time by using as a tie-breaker which driver was higher in point standings. Moore was third with 518 and McGill was fourth with 515. As the fast time driver Moore spun the inversion wheel, which stopped on five. Moore started the main fifth and McGill fourth. Moore was running third starting lap 28 when the fourth place car touched his left-rear quarter panel and got his car out of shape. The right rear of Moore's car slapped the first turn track exit attenuator and he continued. Moore spun out to the backstretch infield as he exited turn two and he pitted under the caution flag. He returned, eight laps down, but dropped out on lap 48, earning 18th position.

Hard charger $100 award winners were Josh Barker (Super Trucks) for his 25th to 15th run; Bob Landreth (Legends) for starting 18th and finishing ninth, and sponsor-seeking Doug McComb (SLM) for racing from 12th on the grid to fifth place. The six fastest SLM qualifiers declined to race in the trophy dash, so the 11th through 16th quickest qualifiers ran the race and Kevin Thompson led all four laps. The USAC portion of the October 7 racing program at IS has been canceled by IS management because many of the 360 cu.

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